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The Shepherd Song

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THE SHEPHERD SONG

BY

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"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

Psalm Twenty-three. First Verse.

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The Shepherd Song

From out the Syrian sky stars look softly down,
Upon the scene below:
One tremulous star, glorying in its trust,
Foretells the hour has come;
The vital travail, the undefiled birth,
Joy in innocence,
Innocence in joy.

Angels caroling weave a halo 'round the swaddled
babe,
Cradled on the Father's footstool.

All through the night the shepherd's eyes,
Followed the beacon light of hope:
Why did the wise men seek mighty Herod's court?
Was it to prepare the flight, and defeat the King?
Laying their precious gifts down at the feet of Love,
They steal away on the faithful "ships of the desert."

As the vine puts forth its tender shoots,
The young branches give bitter wine:
So were the years of our Elder Brother,
'Til had come the fulness of time.

Often our Master looked over the hills,
With their wealth of the gracious vine;
Hidden among the glistening leaves,
Hung clusters of luscious grapes,
Offering their royal purple stream,
For a golden cup of Kings.

Not so the wine our Master drank;
He trod the wine press of loyalty alone,
'Til it poured the rich wine of sacrifice;
Passing the cup to His disciples,
He bade them drink all of it,—
"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine,
Until that day when I drink it new in my Father's
kingdom."

Release came at last with the bitter dregs.

Greed divided the outer garment, seam from seam,
"For the seamless robe they did cast lots."
Did it profit them anything?
The seamless robe is worn by the Christ.

No more tears will water Gethsemane,
The rocks that cry out will soon rejoice,
The winds that shriek among the hills,
Will sing a glad refrain:
Love will quiet the troubled waters,
All will know glad Galilee.

Roseate tints encircling the hills,
Herald the dawning;
In trailing robes of beauty,
The new day is born;
Through the golden glory of the rising sun,
Shines forth the day-star:
Nature is exultant with a hymn of joy.
The delicate fingers of the brooding earth,
Reach toward the hovering spirit,
The sensitive tendrils of the universe,
Quiver with the touch of the infinite fire:
Trees spread their sheltering arms, and
Leaflets tremble from the warbling of birds;
The rocks hold their peace;
Where the brooklet sings, the
Mild-eyed cattle wait;
Doves flutter out along the ledges,
In happy anticipation:
Wonderful harmonies ascend, and,
Descending, enfold the dawn-lit garden:
The stone has rolled away.

"Mary"—"Master."
Willing feet hasten to the disciples—
"He awaits thee in Galilee,—
He has risen."

From Olivet to Calvary,
Hill and vale is bright,
With the flower of His passion;

From the tomb to Galilee,
Fragile lilies bloom anew,
Fragrant with the Saviour's breath.

"I go now unto the Father,
Lovest thou me?
Feed my lambs, feed my sheep;
Peace be unto you,
Lo, I am with you alway."

From never-failing earnest of prayer,
Comes the delicate dawn of awakening,
Angels illumine the green meadow,
Of our consciousness:
We are the branches bearing green leaves,
Giving freshness and beauty to the heart of the world;
Feeding His lambs, and His sheep:
We are at the baptism fount, and in spirit,
We hear the Christ-voice saying,
"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these,
Ye have done it unto me"

Spirit of youth,
  Infold thy wings,
In thy betrothal,
  The Day-Star springs.

Spirit of youth,
  A winsome child,
Angel of truth,
  So pure and mild.

Spirit of youth,
  Infold thy wings,
From brooding love,
  The Day-Star springs.

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